

Bedy Bryan is now living retired in Montezuma, enjoying a rest which he has truly earned and richly deserves. He was very successful in his business operations, conducting farming along extensive lines. At one time he owned six hundred acres and is still the possessor of a valuable property of one hundred and seventy-three acres, which returns to him a gratifying annual income. His birth occurred in Greene county, Ohio, near Jamestown, February 28, 1834, his parents being Alanson and Easter (Mendenhall) Bryan. The Bryan family came from Ireland. Bryan as a surname originated in Ireland in most instances with descendants of Brian Boru, king of Ireland, from 1002 to 1014. The

first form of the name was O'Brien, from which Bryan and many other variations are derived. From King Brian descended a line of chiefs and princes who, with their adherents, defended their national independence for centuries in Thomond, called O'Brien's country, with fierce contests against the Anglo-Norman and British settlers.

Sir Francis Bryan was a prominent man in Ireland about the middle of the sixteenth century and probably became president of Munster. It is thought that he was the ancestor of the following Bryan line. William Smith Bryan was a landholder in Ireland at the time of the English invasion under Cromwell and for championing the cause of the Irish was transported as a rebellious subject in 1650 to the American colonies. He settled in Gloucester county, Virginia. He had eleven sons, of whom Morgan Bryan of Norfolk county, was probably one. It is believed that William Bryan, born in 1685, was another son. He and his wife, Margaret, lived at Ballyrone, County Down Ireland, and one day sent their little son John to the woods to cut a stick to make a handle for a hook used in weaving. The boy was arrested for poaching. After much trouble and expense the father secured his release and immediately sailed for America, where, as he said, timber was free and there were no constables. This was in 1718 and he settled first in New Jersey or Pennsylvania. Their son John wedded Mary Morrison and to them was born a son, Andrew Morrison Bryan, April 25, 1748. He wedded Mary Akers and their son Morrison married Rhoda Johnson and removed from Virginia to Highland county, Ohio, in 1807.

It was in that county that Alanson Bryan, father of our subject, was born in a log schoolhouse, February 4, 1808, and two years later the family removed to Greene county, Ohio, where, at the age of twenty, Alanson Bryan married Easter Mendenhall. He owned a sixth interest in fifty acres of land in Greene county, Ohio, afterward purchased the interests of the other heirs and added to his holdings until he had two hundred acres. In 1849 he sold his property for fifteen dollars per acre and came to Iowa, where he purchased two hundred acres at seven and a half dollars per acre in Mahaska county. He then came to Poweshiek county and intended to enter one hundred and sixty acres adjoining Montezuma on the northeast, but made a misentry and secured one hundred and sixty acres of timber land three miles southwest. Some one discovering his misentry told him of it and B. O. Payne, who had a claim on it, unknown to Mr. Bryan, called a number of the members of the claim club together and started for Oskaloosa to make Mr. Bryan give up the timber land or tar and feather him. John Deardoff, living on Moon creek in Mahaska county, was president of the club. He advised the party to wait, saying that he would go down and get Mr. Bryan. When he returned a trial was held and it was proven that Payne had more land than he could hold by the claim laws, which allowed one hundred and sixty acres of prairie and eighty acres of timber land to an individual. With that the case was dropped. A few years later the land was all taken up and the "claim law" accordingly passed out of use. Within the next two years Alanson Bryan entered land until at one time he owned over eleven hundred acres in Poweshiek county. Three of his children died before coming to Iowa and to the surviving eight he gave each one hundred and twenty acres. His children began, therefore, to settle in this

MRS. AND MRS. BIDDY BRYAN



county in 1850 but the father did not live in Poweshiek county until about 1875. His sons and daughters numbered eleven: Morrison G., John M., Rachel, Dennis, Bedy, William A., Rhoda, Neri E., Talitha, Andrew A. and James J. Seven of these are now living. Of the children J. M. Bryan, Mrs. Rachel Bryan Bone and Neri Bryan, a brother of Alanson, came to Poweshiek county in January, 1850, and lived in the Gideon Willson double log house at the north-west corner of the square in Montezuma until they could erect a log house on the one hundred and sixty acre tract previously mentioned. There they established the first brickyard in the county. In 1851 or 1852 J. M. Bryan married Tacy Jane Smith and removed to the farm northeast of Montezuma, where he still makes his home. His wife died in 1898. W. A. Bryan came to this county in 1856, ran a breaking team with oxen and later opened the Mincer coal mine in Mahaska county, this being the first coal mine on Buck creek. In the following winter he married Catharine Pearson, and in the spring of 1857 they took up their abode in Union township, Poweshiek county. Two sons, Neri E. and Andrew A., were soldiers of the Union army from 1862 until the close of the war. Neri afterward wedded Mary E. Jobe and occupied a farm north of Montezuma, while Andrew married Harriet Harner and settled on his farm a mile and a half north of Montezuma. Several years ago, however, he took up his abode in the city and eighteen years ago Neri Bryan removed to California. Two others of the family, Dennis Bryan and Mrs. Talitha Harner, are mentioned elsewhere in this volume. The mother of this family, Mrs. Easter Bryan, died in 1874 in Hamilton county, Iowa, and the father, Alanson Bryan, afterward came to Poweshiek county, where he continued to live with his children until his death in August, 1897, when in the ninetieth year of his age.

Bedy Bryan, the fifth of the family, came to Iowa with his parents in 1849 and bore the usual hardships and privations of pioneer life in the early days. He resided with his parents until his marriage, April 19, 1855, when with a loaded ox wagon he drove to Montezuma and settled a mile and a half north-east of the town on an eighty acre tract of prairie land on section 6, Jackson township. He also had forty acres of timber land, this property being given him by his father, who had entered it in 1849. Mr. Bryan resided on his eighty acre tract for fifty years lacking two months. He then sold out and since 1905

has made his home in Montezuma. He was also at one time owner of eighty acres in Scott township, which he sold in 1906. Throughout his life he followed farming and was very successful in his work, becoming the owner of over six hundred acres. He made a specialty of stock-raising and his business interests brought to him substantial success. Although he has since disposed of much of his land, he is still the owner of a valuable tract of one hundred and seventy-three acres, which returns to him a gratifying annual income.

On the 19th of April, 1855, Mr. Bryan was married to Miss Margaret A. Victor, who was born in Delaware, October 13, 1834. After living for a time in Ohio and later in Indiana she accompanied her parents to Iowa in 1848, the family being established near Oskaloosa, in the same neighborhood as the Bryan home. She is a daughter of Burton and Sarah A. (Todd) Victor, who were natives of Delaware. Her mother died in Mahaska county, Iowa, and her father passed away in Arkansas. Mr. and Mrs. Bryan became the parents of

five children. Sarah E., the eldest, is the wife of J. M. Chamberlain, of Washington township, and has five children: Sylvia A., Charles L., William, who married Laura Cline and has a son, Virgil; and Clarence and Lawrence, twins. Mary E. died at the age of twenty years. Elliott M., a resident of Montezuma, wedded Mary A. Cochran and they have one child, Lowell V. John B., who for the past thirty years has been agent for the Grinnell & Montezuma Railroad at Montezuma, married Nellie Porter and has two sons: Chester S., who wedded Vida Brown and has one child, Hazel Fay, and Harold. William A., the youngest of the children of Mr. and Mrs. Bedy Bryan, married Nellie Henry and they have five children: Edna L., Howard, who died at the age of four years; Ellis, who died at the age of seven years; Verna, and Raymond V.

No history of this county would be complete without extended mention of the Bryan family, one of the oldest within its borders. The representatives of the name have ever been loyal in citizenship and reliable in business and have made excellent records in every relation of life. Bedy Bryan tells most interesting stories and incidents of the early days when the family were undergoing all the hardships of a new country. They lived here during the era of wild-cat money from 1854 until 1860, which made it doubly hard, as one had to consult Thompson's Bank-Note Detector every time they received a paper dollar, as the value changed nearly every day. One day it would be quoted at its face and the next day ten or twenty cents on the dollar; sometimes it was fifty cents and again it was worthless. It was not safe to keep money on hand twenty-four hours, but the money system of the country, like all other things, has changed and the people of Poweshiek county are now living in a splendidly developed region, the naturally rich and fertile land responding readily to the care and cultivation bestowed upon it, while business interests of many kinds have here sprung up, affording excellent opportunity to the man who is willing to put forth earnest, honest labor for the attainment of success.

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BRYAN, B.—Farmer and stock-dealer, section 6, P. O. Montezuma. Was born in Ohio, February 28, 1834, and when fifteen years of age he removed to Mahaska county, this State, and there commenced farming. He remained there until the spring of 1855, when he came to Poweshiek county, and has since resided here, following farming and stock-dealing. He is the owner of 132 acres of improved land, and also owns 240 acres in Shelby county, this State, and 160 in Missouri. He is situated one mile northeast of Montezuma, and has a good location. He was married in Mahaska county, this State, April 14, 1855, to Miss Margaret A. Victor. They have four children living: Sarah E., Elliott M., John B. and William A. Lost one, Mary E. Mr. B. has an orchard of 125 trees, and also a walnut grove of 400 young trees.